

unilateral and preemptive action which does not achieve peace for Americans. America needs a new direction

Mr. Speaker, we must seize the moment and insist on a new direction for America so our children and our children's children will live in a safer and more secure environment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WESTMORELAND). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Dakota (Ms. HERSETH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. HERSETH addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

VIOLENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, today, again, the newspapers of our country tell the story of more organized killings, more death, more carnage, more bombings, more escalating violence in the Middle East.

There are photos in this newspaper of fathers and relatives crying in Lebanon, and below it, young people crying in Haifa, in Israel. We all read these stories and we say, why cannot the killing stop? I as just one Member of this Congress am very proud to represent a community that knows what it will take for the killing to stop.

Toledo, Ohio, in fact, was the first community in the United States of America to elect a mayor who was of American Lebanese heritage, Michael Damas, who is no longer living. You know, I am so proud of the people of my community.

Today they came to our office in Toledo and they said, Congresswoman, we have a statement that we would like you to consider. And I thought it was so thoughtful and even-handed that I wanted to read it to the American people tonight. They asked, of course, that Americans who are in Lebanon be removed safely, and they asked us to urge the President of our country to move them out quickly.

But then they wrote, "We the American Lebanese Descent Community of Toledo request that the war and the bombing be suspended and our U.S. Government pursue peace and save lives in the region: Americans, Israelis, Palestinians, Lebanese and others. It is a simple statement. But I think it is a much more judicious statement than the President of our country made as part of the G-8 summit the other day

when using a vulgarity. The President said at one point that Syria should get Hezbollah to stop its attacks on Israel.

His statement was not even-handed, it was not comprehensive, it did not talk about peace, it did not recognize the legitimate interests of the people of this country, the people of Israel, the people of Lebanon, the people of a future Palestinian.

His statement did not talk about limiting carnage, and the retribution that characterizes the deteriorating situation in Lebanon and in adjoining countries. I am very proud of the people of the greater Toledo area for understanding what it is going to take to create peace and to initiate peace.

I am very proud to sponsor today as well, a resolution submitted by Congressman KUCINICH of Cleveland that reads as follows. It calls upon our President to appeal to all sides in the current crisis in the Middle East for an immediate cessation of violence and to commit the United States and our diplomats to multiparty negotiations with no preconditions.

And it calls upon the President to appeal to all of those sides, as the people in my community have done, for an immediate cessation of violence. Would it have not been great if President Bush, like President Reagan had done with Menachem Began when he served as Prime Minister of Israel, and asked for an immediate cessation of violence? That did not happen with President Bush.

This resolution of Mr. KUCINICH would commit the United States and our diplomatic efforts to multiparty negotiations without precondition. It would send high-level diplomatic missions to the region to facilitate such multiparty negotiations, and would include representatives from the Governments of Israel, Lebanon, Iran, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, the Palestinian Authority and it would support an international peacekeeping mission to southern Lebanon to prevent cross-border skirmishes during such multiparty negotiations.

Does that not sound like a much healthier way for the world to move? There will be many resolutions offered here this week. And I ask myself, will they be as judicious as the people of our community? Will they be as full-bodied? Will they be as even-handed? Will they have a peace process envisioned at the end of this horrible, horrible road?

Will they recognize the legitimate interests of all parties concerned? And will they seek to limit carnage, or will those resolutions continue to engender hate and further retribution?

Mr. Speaker, this is a critical time for the world, not just for our country, but for so many fragile nations who really need the time to heal and the time to let democracy develop.

Mr. Speaker, I hope, with those peace-loving people of our community that peace is just ahead.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SOUDER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WELDON of Florida addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. McDERMOTT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JINDAL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JINDAL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GILCHREST addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BERRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BERRY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. OWENS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

BLUE DOG COALITION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, this evening as I do each Tuesday evening that the United States House of Representatives is in session, I rise on behalf of the 37-Member-strong fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition.

As you walk the halls of Congress, as you walk the halls of the Cannon House Office Building, the Longworth House Office Building and the Rayburn House Office Building, it is easy to spot an office that belongs to one of the 37 Members of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, because you will find this poster as a welcome mat by each door of a Blue Dog member.

As you can see, today the U.S. national debt is \$8,419,147,820,878 and some change. Your share of the national debt, that is every living man, woman and child, including the children born today, every American citizen's share of the national debt is \$28,134.

As Members of the Blue Dog Coalition, it is what we call the debt tax, d-e-b-t, and that is one tax that cannot go away until this Republican Congress and this administration gets our Nation's fiscal house in order.

Last week, the President made a big announcement about how the deficit really was not as bad as what his White House had first thought and reported it would be. I think the best way to sum up the events of last week can be found in an editorial, July 11, 2006, from the Los Angeles Times entitled "Another Mission Accomplished."

And I will not read the entire editorial, but I think it sets the stage for what we plan to spend the next hour discussing this evening. It starts off like this: "The release of the White House mid-session budget review is an annual event normally marked by a few wonkish observations and the routine updating of various spreadsheets, not by a full-dressed Presidential dog-and-pony show. But President Bush plans to preside today with Members of Congress and invited guests in attendance. By all indications, including his own, in his weekly radio address last Saturday, he plans to turn this into a celebration just in time for the fall campaign."

The editorial from the Los Angeles Times dated July 11, 2006 continues. "This is proof, if anyone still needs it, that this administration is desperate for something to boast about. On Mr. Bush's watch, triple-digit budget surpluses have turned into annual triple-digit budget deficits.

"There is no information in the mid-session report to alter that utterly dispiriting fact. Yes, the report is expected to project that this year's deficit will be somewhat less gargantuan than last year's, probably somewhere

between \$280 and \$300 billion versus a \$318 billion shortfall in 2005."

And it concludes, that part of the editorial, by saying, "That is not much to crow about." Well, they are right. Last week the administration released its mid-session review of the budget. And after further examination, let's take a closer look at what the report actually tells us.

The report actually tells us that what we have here is another record deficit. The administration's updated estimate of \$296 billion deficit makes 2006 one of the four largest deficits in our Nation's history. It is hard now to believe that we had a balanced budget in this country from 1998 to 2001. But it did not take this administration and this Republican-led Congress very long to turn fiscal responsibility into record deficits.

□ 2000

As you can see, the largest deficit ever in our Nation's history occurred in 2004 when the Republicans controlled the White House, the House, and the Senate. It was \$413 billion in red ink, in hot checks, if you will.

The year 2003 was the second largest deficit ever in our Nation's history, where, for the first time in over 50 years, the Republicans controlled the White House, the House and Senate, and they gave us the second largest deficit ever in our Nation's history, \$378 billion.

The third largest record deficit ever in our Nation's history again occurred while the Republicans controlled the White House, the House, and the Senate. It was in 2005, and it was \$318 billion deficit, the third largest deficit ever in our Nation's history.

Then this year, the President has a press conference, has a grand ceremony and event to announce that the deficit for fiscal year 2006 is only \$296 billion, the fourth largest deficit ever in our Nation's history. I think the editorial in the Los Angeles Times had it right when it said that is not much to crow about.

The administration's updated estimate of \$296 billion deficit, as I indicated, makes 2006 the fourth largest deficit ever in our Nation's history.

While this number represents an improvement over the 2005 deficit of \$318 billion, it still ranks as the fourth largest deficit ever in our Nation's history. These revised estimates do not account for the extent of our budget problems, because they include in the calculation the annual surpluses in Social Security.

The first bill I filed as a Member of Congress when I got here in 2001 was a bill to tell the politicians in Washington to keep their hands off the Social Security trust fund. This Republican Congress refused to give me a hearing or a vote on that bill, and now we know why, because they are raiding the Social Security trust fund to fund tax cuts for those earning over \$400,000 a year.

They are raiding the Social Security trust fund to fund this out-of-control deficit, this out-of-control debt, this reckless spending that we are seeing occurring in our Nation's capital and the way the Republican leadership is running our government and this country. In fact, when the Social Security surplus is excluded, as it should be, the 2006 deficit is not \$296 billion; it is \$473 billion.

Now, throughout the evening we are going to be talking more about this, including projected surpluses, and how they became huge deficits. I will talk more about that in a little bit, but I have been joined this evening by the cochair for policy for the Blue Dog Coalition, JIM COOPER from Tennessee. Glad to have you with us this evening.

Mr. COOPER. Thank you. I thank my good friend from Arkansas, and I appreciate your excellent summary of our fiscal situation.

Because Americans lead busy lives, we were happy to get a little bit of good news last week, or what we thought was good news. The President and the administration certainly built it up as if it was good news. I am glad that the deficit is looking a little smaller than the White House had predicted. That is good news, and I appreciate that.

But it is still very important for Americans to put that in perspective. As my friend from Arkansas points out, it is good news, and it is not the largest deficit in American history; it is only the fourth largest deficit in American history. So that is something to be grateful for.

But it reminded me a little bit of telling somebody, hey, the good news is your cancer is in remission. Well, that is good news. It is good news the cancer is in remission, but the bad news is you still have cancer.

What we are concerned about as Blue Dogs is not a temporary deficit. Sometimes the Nation has to run a temporary deficit. What we are concerned about are permanent structural deficits, deficits that grow beyond our possible ability to repay the debt, deficits that strangle economic growth, that prevent us from building a stronger country for our kids and grandkids.

We are worried about deficits that hurt the middle class, because as my friend from Arkansas mentioned, there is a \$28,000 per citizen tax on everyone in America, man, woman or child. That is a lot of money to be born owing the country before you even have a chance to grow up or earn a living.

But I know there are some folks out there who are watching us, and they are saying, well, the Blue Dogs, they are only mentioning absolute deficit dollars. They are not putting it in perspective with gross domestic product. I would agree that is a percent of GDP; we should look at it that way too. You can say, well, this is not a percent of GDP, the largest or even the fourth largest deficit in American history.